

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1602

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Operations and Services

Performance, NWSPD 10-1602

SERVICE EVALUATION

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 10-1602 *Service Evaluation*, dated May 11, 2010.

The following changes were made:

1. The cover sheet was updated to reflect the NWS Headquarters reorganization effective April 1, 2015.
2. Minor grammatical and formatting changes were made throughout the document.
3. Added information about the objectives of this directive and about the Paperwork Reduction Act to Section 1 (Objectives).
4. Added a paragraph about customer satisfaction surveys to Section 2 (Evaluation at National Weather Service and NWS regional headquarters).
5. Added examples of activities involving NWS partners (e.g., open houses, partners meetings to kick off a hazardous weather season, joint training exercises with partners, integrated weather team workshops) to Section 3 (Evaluation of Weather Forecast Offices).
6. Deleted Appendix A (Teams) and all references in the body of the text to “teams.”

Signed
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8/3/16
Date

Service Evaluation

Table of Contents:	<u>Page</u>
1 Objectives	2
2 Evaluation at National Weather Service and NWS Regional Headquarters	3
3 Evaluation at Weather Forecast Offices (WFO)	3
4 Evaluation at Center Weather Service Units (CWSU)	3
5 Evaluation at National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP).....	3
6 NCEP Evaluation for NWS Internal Partners	4
7 NCEP Evaluation for NWS External Partners and Users	4
8 Managing Service Evaluation Results	4
Appendix A Recommended and Preferred Practices	A-1
Appendix B Glossary of Terms	B-1

1 Objectives

The objectives of the service evaluation program are to enable the NWS to constantly improve its services/products, respond to changing needs of partners and other users, design and create new products and services, and to regularly evaluate effectiveness. An excellent time to gather information on services is following significant events. Any meetings with emergency managers, local officials, the media, and other partners should be scheduled at the convenience of the partners. Federal government limitations on how feedback can be obtained is specified at this Paperwork Reduction Act web link: http://www.cio.noaa.gov/services_programs/pr.html

There are a few ways to gather information without needing PRA clearance, such as public meetings and solicitations for general comments. No clearance is needed if attendees at a public meeting are just asked to comment or give suggestions on the program or subject in question. General discussions and listening sessions about programs and goals present no problem. If, however, the group is gathered for the purpose of having attendees respond to a specific set of formatted questions, then the Paperwork Reduction Act does apply. Also, no clearance is needed if the public is offered the opportunity to make comments or suggestions, so long as the public is not asked specific questions other than self-identification (name, address, e-mail). Many websites, for instance, offer a box or e-mail address for people to give comments, and that is not a clearance problem.

2 Evaluation at National Weather Service and NWS Regional Headquarters

National Weather Service Headquarters (NWSHQ) offices and regional headquarters will hold periodic workshops and/or use other methods (e.g., national partners meetings) to interact and cooperate with NWS partners. Feedback from partners will contribute to policy changes and service improvements. Where applicable, NWSHQ offices and regional headquarters should hold joint activities when working with partners and users. In addition, NWSHQ regularly conducts customer satisfaction surveys to obtain feedback on the quality of its products and services from its users and the general public.

3 Evaluation at Weather Forecast Offices (WFO)

WFOs will document evaluation and outreach activities (e.g., open houses, partners meetings to kick off a hazardous weather season, joint training exercises with partners, integrated weather team workshops) and summarize changes made to services resulting from partner/user feedback.

Based on outreach activities, interaction with users, and respondent comments from customer satisfaction surveys, each office will be able to summarize the overall level of user satisfaction in the various program areas including: (1) major areas of user concerns, and (2) programs/efforts that have been well received. Recommended and preferred practices are included in Appendix A.

4 Evaluation at Center Weather Service Units (CWSU)

Evaluations at CWSUs will focus on its internal activities and service to the FAA and aviation community. The Meteorologists in Charge (MIC) of the CWSU, local Air Route Traffic Control Center personnel and the associated WFO will collaborate on CWSU evaluation and determine:

- a. frequency and scope of evaluation activities;
- b. reporting requirements; and
- c. level of support (e.g., staff, training, coordination) provided by the WFO and regional headquarters.

5 Evaluation at National Centers for Environmental Prediction

NCEP management will determine the scope of NCEP's evaluation program, as well as the schedule of evaluation activities. Evaluation activities should be ongoing so partner/user feedback is continuous and there is prompt identification and resolution of problems. Where applicable, NCEP should hold joint evaluation activities with NWSHQ offices, regional headquarters, and WFOs with national center-type responsibilities.

6 NCEP Evaluation for NWS Internal Partners

NCEP gathers feedback from the various constituencies in the NWS. NCEP will also determine the methods whereby evaluations will be accomplished (e.g., workshops, visiting scientist programs). Evaluation activities will include but not be limited to:

- a. quality and usability of NCEP services, including models, model data, and other products;
- b. ease of access to NWS employees;
- c. collaborative research efforts;
- d. internal processes leading to more efficient operations; and
- e. collaborative activities among Centers and WFOs with center-type responsibilities issuing similar products.

7 NCEP Evaluation for NWS External Partners and Users

Gathering feedback via workshops or other methods should be employed on a periodic basis to determine:

- a. the satisfaction level of external partners and users with NCEP products and services;
- b. effectiveness of NCEP/partner relationship in serving users;
- c. ease of access to external users and partners;
- d. quality and utility of NCEP services, including models, model data, and other products;
- e. needed improvements in products and services;
- f. partner/user impact on future models, products and services; and
- g. other information as determined by NCEP and/or its partners and users.

NCEP will also determine the methods whereby evaluations will be accomplished.

8 Managing Service Evaluation Results

Offices are encouraged to share evaluation successes and failures with other offices. Regional and National service program managers should monitor this information exchange/flow, and publicize the most effective strategies for running a successful program. WFOs with national center-type responsibilities in aviation, marine, hurricane, and other programs should encourage the exchange of information with NCEP. Problems uncovered by the evaluation process at individual offices or Centers will be addressed by the respective region or NCEP, unless the problem is national in scope or otherwise requires NWSHQ collaboration.

APPENDIX A – Recommended and Preferred Practices

Table of Contents:	<u>Page</u>
1 WFO Evaluation Methods	A-1
2 WFO Internal Evaluation	A-2
3 WFO External Evaluation.....	A-2
4 Documentation.....	A-2
4.1 Outreach Activities	A-2
4.2 Program Evaluations	A-3

1 WFO Evaluation Methods

- a. The Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) will manage the evaluation activities and recommendations to the Meteorologist in Charge (MIC). The WCM will also summarize recommended changes to products and services for the office management team.
- b. Obtain evaluation data through feedback from partners and users to determine the level of satisfaction with the office's products and services.
- c. WFOs will seek the help of their respective regional headquarters when weighing adherence to NWS policy against modifying products and services. Examples of possible changes to products and services include the use of characteristic terminology or wording common in the local area and the provision of additional avenues of personal contact. Any changes are coordinated with the regional headquarters.
- d. Examples of feedback methods are face-to-face meetings, workshops, seminars, customer satisfaction surveys, telephone/conference calls, service outage emails and call-in reports (<mailto:nwroutage@noaa.gov>) announcements over the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio All Hazards, the Internet, NWSChat, as well as the utilization of government-approved Social Networking/Social Media accounts (e.g., NWS Facebook page).

2 WFO Internal Evaluation

Internal evaluation of WFO operations includes all activities that support or lead to provision of the office's products and services. Normally, internal changes should be driven by partner/user requests or requirements based on evaluation of external products and services. Changes to operations that are the result of management directive, union negotiation, or employee/team suggestions and are determined to have a major impact on products or services should be discussed with partners and users to ensure there is no decrease in satisfaction. Internal activities and processes chosen for evaluation should be those most likely to result in tangible improvements readily apparent to NWS partners and users.

3 WFO External Evaluation

External evaluation covers those areas of WFO operations that are "visible" to partners and users. In most cases this consists of the products and services the office provides to partners and users. The routine and/or hazardous weather information in the following service areas, if applicable, will be evaluated: fire and public weather, climate, aviation, marine and coastal, and hydrology.

Other activities for evaluation include but are not limited to:

- a. Office interaction and partnership with the media, emergency managers, and other government agencies;
- b. Outreach activities (e.g., school visits, spotter and other weather-related talks, participation at boat shows, weather training for HAM radio operator networks, interviews);
- c. NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards, NOAA Weather Wire Service, Emergency Managers Weather Information Network, Interactive NWS (iNWS), NWSChat, NWS Outreach and Education Event System (NOEES), and other NWS dissemination systems; and
- d. Public and partner access (e.g., ease of use in accessing NWS Internet sites, iNWS, NOEES, digital telephone answering systems, office visits).

4 Documentation

4.1 Outreach Activities

NOEES and the Integrated Database for Education and Awareness are available computer software applications to assist in the documentation of outreach activities. This software provides the forecaster with the capability to enter data such as the following: event type, date, audience, topics discussed, number of attendees, location, and feedback.

4.2 Program Evaluations

Offices may find it useful to document program evaluations annually by including the following information:

- a. An innovative evaluation process/feedback method used other than the normal interaction with users including the benefits derived from such activities;
- b. A summary of the products, services, programs and initiatives with supporting commentary on effectiveness including a description of any product and/or service that was particularly well received by partner/users;
- c. Major concerns, issues, or problem areas associated with products and services;
- d. Trends, as appropriate; and
- e. Success stories.

APPENDIX B – Glossary of Terms

Service Evaluation – The process of determining how users value NWS products and services. The determination is made by qualitative and quantitative feedback from partners and users.

Qualitative Feedback – The value of products and services to partners and users. It takes the form of subjective data (e.g., comments, compliments, complaints).

Quantitative Feedback – The utility of products and services to partners and users. It takes the form of objective data (e.g., timeliness, clarity, ease of use).

Office Evaluation – Review of field office integrity, including compliance with policies, internal controls, information technology, facilities, and human and fiscal resource management.

Partner – Companies, corporations, vendors, agencies, universities, etc., that associate with NWS in the distribution of weather information and services.

Public – The people of a parish, county, independent city, commonwealth, state, territory, region, or nation.

User – An individual, government agency, or other entity which uses NWS water, weather, and climate information and services for making critical decisions.